

135590 - Is the hadeeth “I have brought slaughter to you” saheeh, and how should it be understood?

the question

Can you comment on this hadeeth and its isnaad? Did the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say to Quraysh that he had come to them to slaughter them? How are we to understand this hadeeth? What is the meaning of the hadeeth? I hope that you can explain, because I find this hadeeth very confusing. The text of the hadeeth says: “I have brought slaughter to you.” The hadeeth was narrated by Shaykh ‘Abd as-Salaam ash-Shaami: Ya‘qoob said: My father told us, from Ibn Ishaaq who said: And Yahya ibn ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr told me, from his father ‘Urwah, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas. He said: I said to him: What is the worst incident of aggression and hostility that you saw on the part of Quraysh towards the Messenger of Allah? He said: I was present when their prominent figures met together one day in al-Hijr. They talked about the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and they said: We have never put up with anything like that with which we are putting up with from this man. He has accused us of being fools, slandered our forefathers, criticised our religion, divided us and reviled our gods, and the matter has become very serious – or words to that effect. Whilst they were like that, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came walking until he touched the corner (of the Ka ‘bah, where the Black Stone is), then he passed by them as he circumambulated the House. When he passed by them, they made fun of some of the words he was saying, and I could see from his face that it caused him pain. Then he moved on, then when he passed by them the second time, they made fun of him in like manner, and I could see from his face that it caused him pain. Then he moved on, then when he passed by them the third time, they made fun of him in like manner, then he said: “Listen to me, O Quraysh! By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, I have brought slaughter to you.” The people were so shocked that each man among them froze, as if there was a bird on his head, and those who had spoken most harshly to him before that began speaking to him with the kindest words, saying: Leave us, O Abu'l-Qaasim, for by Allah you have never been an ignorant man. So he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) left them. The next day, they met

together in al-Hijr, and I was with them. They said to one another: (Yesterday) you said how impatient you are becoming with him, and what you have heard about him and what he is saying, then as soon as he said something that alarmed you, you left him alone. Whilst they were talking about that, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) appeared and they rushed towards him as one and surrounded him, saying to him: You are the one who said such and such – referring to what they had heard about his criticism of their gods and their religion. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Yes, I am the one who said that.” I saw one of them grab the neck of his garment, and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him) got up to defend him and said, weeping: Would you kill a man just because he says, my lord is Allah? Then they left him alone. That was the worst incident of aggression that I saw on the part of Quraysh.

Narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad.

Detailed answer

This hadeeth was narrated by Ahmad in al-Musnad (11/609 – Mu’sasat ar-Risaalah edition), from the Sahaabi ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (may Allah be pleased with him). It was classed as hasan by the commentators, and also by Shaykh Ahmad Shaakir in Tahqeeq al-Musnad. It was also classed as hasan by al-Haythami in Majma‘ az-Zawaa’id (6/19), and by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Mawaarid (1403).

In a report narrated by Imam al-Bukhaari (3678), it says that ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I asked ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr about the worst incident of aggression and hostility that he saw on the part of Quraysh towards the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He said: I saw ‘Uqbah ibn Abi Mu‘ayt come to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when he was praying and put his rida’ around his neck and throttle him severely. Then Abu Bakr came and pushed him away and said: “Would you kill a man because he says: My Lord is Allah, and he has come to you with clear signs (proofs) from your Lord?” [Ghaafir 40:28].

And it was narrated that the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “By Allah, you will not stop until His punishment comes upon you soon.” After that, he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to his companions: “Be of good cheer, for Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will cause His religion to prevail, will make His word supreme and will grant victory to His Prophet. These people whom you see are among those whom Allah will slaughter at your hands soon.”

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar, in Fath al-Baari (1/168) attributed it to az-Zubayr ibn Bakkaar, as did ad-Daaraqutni in al-Afraad, and he pointed out that this report is da‘eef (weak).

See: Fath al-Baari (1/166-170) for other versions of this hadeeth.

This wording, “I have brought slaughter to you”, undoubtedly has a sound meaning, and it should not cause confusion in the mind of the questioner or of any rational person. What is meant by slaughter here applies to a few specific individuals, who were the ones who persisted in disbelieving in Allah and waging war against Islam and its people, persecuting those who were in a weak position, oppressing women and old people among the believers, in order to turn them away from their religion, and imposing their principles and beliefs by means of murder, torture and persecution. These are the ones who killed some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the harshest manner. They stabbed Sumayyah, the wife of Yaasir, in her private part, and killed Yaasir when he was an old man, and tortured Bilaal in the desert, and plotted to kill the best of creation, namely Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). They did not omit any method of torture and oppression but they practised it against this group of believers, until they forced them to migrate to Abyssinia, nursing their wounds and bearing their pain, in the hope that they would find peace and safety with the king of Abyssinia.

This is some of what these criminals among the disbelievers of Quraysh did to the believers. As for their arrogance towards the Lord of mankind, that is another matter altogether, which Allah has told us about in dozens of verses in the Holy Qur'an. After all that, didn't these people deserve to be killed in order to ward off their evil and save people from their harm?

Is it not wise and rational to confront them – sometimes – with force and threats and warnings, when their plots and aggression reach such a level?

Why would any rational person be confused and find it hard to accept the Prophet's warning to them of a speedy punishment from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, when they were more deserving of it than the people of 'Aad and Thamood and the people of all the Prophets, whose enmity towards the Prophets and believers we know of from the Holy Qur'an?

Could any rational person forget to such an extent what these criminals did to the weak and oppressed believers? Could he forget the days of persecution and mistreatment that they suffered, which breaks the heart of anyone who reads their stories, then could he feel sympathy for the aggressors – who were the leaders of the disbelievers of Quraysh – because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) threatened them with killing and slaughter on just one occasion?

Is this how matters are evaluated according to rational standards??

If those haters try to confuse people, and take these words out of context, and want to depict the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) as a shedder of blood and a lover killing and slaughter, their argument should not deceive rational people, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Rather what must be done is to evaluate this incident – like any other incident – on the basis of two important standards:

- 1.the context in which it occurred and the type of people addressed, and the incident which explains it and highlights what was intended by it;
- 2.examining all related texts objectively, by means of which it is possible to understand the Islamic point of view concerning this matter, not just looking at a single text only.

The one who does not do that will be misled and confused, and he will yielded his rational thinking to anyone who comes along with a specious argument and to anyone who is able to make evil and corrupt insinuations.

We also say:

How can you believe the claim of one who says that Islam came to kill everyone who does not follow it, when all people know for certain that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) pardoned the people of Makkah after their intense persecution of him? The angel of the mountains offered to crush them between al-Akhshabayn (two mountains in Makkah), but the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Rather I hope that Allah will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allah alone, not associating anything with Him.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3231) and Muslim (1795).

After the conquest of Makkah, he also pardoned the disbelievers of Quraysh who wronged the believers and devoured their wealth. In fact he even honoured some of their leaders in the hope that they would become good Muslims, when he said – on the day of the conquest of Makkah –: “Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyaan will be safe.” Narrated by Muslim (331).

So how can you believe this claim when Allah, may He be exalted, has prescribed that we should accept the jizyah from the followers of other religions, and agree to their remaining under the protection and care of the Islamic state?

How can you believe this claim when we know for sure how the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) accepted a treaty with the Jews of Madinah and coexisted with them in the hope that they would adhere to the treaty and not break it treacherously? And he did not fight any of them until they were the ones who broke the treaty and committed acts of treachery.

Didn’t the Lord of Glory say, explaining the purposes behind the sending of the message in one sentence about our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): “And We have sent you (O Muhammad blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) not but as a mercy for the ‘Alameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists)” [al-Anbiya’ 21:107].

Indeed, Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, also says (interpretation of the meaning):

“If they (Jews) belie you (Muhammad blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say you: ‘Your Lord is the Owner of Vast Mercy, and never will His Wrath be turned back from the people who are Mujrimoon (criminals, polytheists, sinners, etc.)’”

[al-An'aam 6:147].

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Here Allah, may He be exalted, says: If your opponents – O Muhammad – among the mushrikeen and Jews and others of their ilk reject you, then say: “Your Lord is the Owner of Vast Mercy”. This is encouragement to them to seek the mercy of Allah and follow His Messenger.

“and never will His Wrath be turned back from the people who are Mujrimoon” – this is a warning to them against opposing and going against the Messenger, the Seal of the Prophets. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur'an al-'Azeem (3/357)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It was said: O Messenger of Allah, pray against the mushrikeen. He said: “I was not sent as an invoker of curses, rather I was sent as a mercy.” Narrated by Muslim (2599).

We hope that these words will be a beneficial reminder by means of which Allah will dispel the questioner's confusion about the meaning of this hadeeth.

And Allah knows best.